

## REMARKS

### Specification

The Examiner objected to the word "comprises" in lines 2 and 3 of the abstract in favor of "includes". The abstract has been corrected.

The Examiner objected to the sentence beginning on line 10 of page 8 of the disclosure due to informalities. The sentence has been amended per the Examiner's suggestion.

### Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claim 6 because of informalities. The claim has been amended per the Examiner's request.

### Election/Restrictions

Examiner has indicated that claims 1-13, 17, 18 and 39-46 will be the subject of this examination as part of a final decision. This decision has been made for the following reason: "Since all of the embodiments of the invention are independently and patentable distinct, search and examination can be made to all of the embodiments with serious burden." The Examiner also indicates that claims 15, 47 and 48 are withdrawn from consideration. Therefore, it is understood that claims 1-13, 17, 18 and 39-46 are the subject of prosecution in this office action.

### Claim Rejections

#### 35 U.S.C. 102(e)

#### Claims 1-9, 11-13, 17 and 39-46

Examiner rejected Claims 1-9, 11-13, 17 and 39-46 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,592,238

to Cleaver et al ("Cleaver"). The Examiner's arguments and the references were carefully studied.

Cleaver discloses an elongated illumination device 10 that has an array of light sources 24 that can be illuminated via electric power. As shown in FIG. 1 of Cleaver, the device 10 comprises a waveguide 12 and a housing 14, each of which is described as preferably being formed of a rigid, high impact resistant material. This material can be formed into "profiled rods", but because the material is rigid and impact resistant it must be "molded or extruded into rods having the desired shape." (col. 5, lines 8-11).

The Cleaver illumination device design is critical because it does not describe a device made from flexible materials. A solid rod by definition is not a flexible design, and in order for the rod to be bent into a desired shape, molding and extrusion processes must be used. The result of this design is that the solid rod cannot be bent into a desired shape unless it is heated or introduced to other conditions suitable to change the nature of the material such that it can be manipulated. Moreover, once the rod is bent into a desired shape by the molding or extrusion processes, it remains in that shape.

By contrast, the invention of claim 1 includes a "flexible material" that provides a number of advantages over the solid rod design described in Cleaver. Specifically, the extrusion 12 with its flexible printed circuit assembly 14 and light sources 15 is capable of being bent into numerous embodiments, including tight curves, by merely applying a bending force. Moreover, once said bending force is removed, the lighting system 10 provides a further advantage by returning to its former straight condition. The system is designed so that it can be easily and "repeatedly bent and returned without damage to or failure to

the extrusion 12 and/or the printed circuit assembly 14". (See page 9, lines 6-15 of the Specification).

Claim 1 is an independent claim from which claims 2-9, 11-13 and 17 depend. Applicants respectfully submit Cleaver does not disclose, teach or suggest the elements of claim 1 and that claim 1 is allowable over Cleaver. Cleaver does not disclose, teach or suggest a flexible lighting system arrangement. Accordingly, claim 1 is allowable. Claims 2-9, 11-13 and 17 depend from claim 1 and as such are also allowable.

Claim 39 is an independent claim from which claims 40-43 depend. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 39 is allowable over Cleaver for the same reasons that claim 1 is allowable over Cleaver. Claims 40-43 depend from claim 39 and as such are also allowable.

Claim 44 is an independent claim from which claims 45-46 depend. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 44 is allowable over Cleaver for the same reasons that claims 1 and 39 are allowable over Cleaver. Furthermore, Cleaver does not disclose, teach or suggest an arrangement in which LEDs are electrically interconnected via redundant conductive traces, at least one purpose of said arrangement being to provide power to LEDs should one of the conductive traces fail. Because the Cleaver patent makes no reference to *redundant* conductive traces, claim 44 as written is allowable. Claims 45-46 depend from claim 44 and as such are also allowable.

35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claim 10

Examiner rejected Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cleaver in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,186,645 to Camarota ("Camarota"). The Examiner's arguments and the

references were carefully studied. However, the Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 10 depends from allowable claim 1 and as such is also allowable.

Claim 18

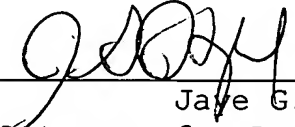
Examiner rejected Claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cleaver in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,361,186 to Slayden ("Slayden"). The Examiner's arguments and the references were carefully studied. However, the Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 18 depends from allowable claim 1 and as such is also allowable.

**CONCLUSION**

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims herein are allowable and request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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